

I came here in 1994, and earlier my colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) talked about what we did in 1995 and 1996. One of the things we did that I will always be proud of is, we reformed the welfare system, and we put limits on welfare. We heard some of the same arguments back then, Oh, my gosh, people are going to be thrown into the streets, people will go hungry, this is going to be terrible. Well, let us look at what happened. We cut the welfare caseloads by 50 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I always said, and I really believe this, welfare reform was never about saving money. It was about saving people; it was about saving families; it was about saving children from one more generation of dependency and despair.

Unfortunately, our friends on the left still believe in big government. They somehow believe that big government programs can really solve problems.

Mr. Speaker, we believe people should not go to bed hungry.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his time tonight. I will remind everyone that facts are stubborn things. We know we do not balance the budget by raising taxes and balancing it on the backs of hard-working Americans. You get this deficit under control by cutting spending and promoting economic growth and creating a bright future for future generations.

### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is once again an honor to come before the House, and we want to give thanks to the Democratic leadership for allowing us to be here one more night.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know, the 30-Something Working Group and hard-working members on this side of the aisle have come to the floor repeatedly, night after night, in some instances, 2 to 3 hours, to inform not only the Members, Mr. Speaker, but also the American people on what is happening to them under this budget. I will tell my colleagues something for them.

As I stand here now on the floor, Mr. Speaker, the Rules Committee is meeting. They are not meeting under the lights of the American people or even in the daylight. They are meeting here at almost, close to 9 o'clock at night to try to figure out how they can come to the floor and put forth a budget that is going to increase lines at veteran hospitals and clinics in rural areas, decrease services to veterans, and also bring up a higher copayment and premiums for veterans to be able to receive health care.

They are meeting now trying to figure out, Mr. Speaker, how poor chil-

dren, who do not have to pay a copayment to get health care, they are trying to figure out how they can explain that to the American people and how they can bring it to the floor and package it in a way that even some moderate Republicans can vote for it.

They are trying to figure out now, Mr. Speaker, they are going to be able to ask Members of this Congress, who have been federalized by the fact that they have been elected to Congress, to watch out for the well-being of the country; and drilling, having oil rigs just miles off the coast of Florida where so many of us here in this country go to these destinations for relaxation.

And also as it relates to even helping our own U.S. economy, people fly from overseas to come over and try to enjoy themselves and, at the same time, bring dollars to the United States. They are trying to figure out how they can go to pristine areas throughout our country and national parks and how they can stick an oil rig in the middle of a national park because special interests want that to happen, not that the American people want it to happen.

They are also trying to figure out, Mr. Speaker, how they can save face, and when I say "they," I am saying the Republican majority, how they can come to this floor and ask Members to vote to increase fees for students, which is going to be handed down to the States and they are going to have to increase fees to students for college education as it relates to loans.

They also are trying to figure out how they are going to say that their budget is better than the Democratic alternative, and it is all about priorities.

Mr. Speaker, that is the reason why we are here on the floor tonight. This is the eve of the budget vote. I will tell my colleagues this: I just do not know how, on the majority side, they can swell up about the troops, how they can get teary-eyed, how they can talk about the War on Terror, how they can talk about all of the things that they talk about as it relates to defending our country, and then those very individuals that are defending our country, as we speak, Mr. Speaker, will come back only to have to wait 6 months to see a specialist at the VA.

Where is the money going to come from and the services if you are pulling the rug out from under the veterans?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this is about third-party validators. This is not KENDRICK MEEK, TIM RYAN, BILL DELAHUNT; this is not just us spewing out rhetoric to the American people, Mr. Speaker.

I want to read a letter that I think may be of some interest to the Republican majority as they are all deciding right now how they are going to vote. It is about time you get on your knees, you say your prayers before you go to bed tonight. The Republican majority needs to remember this letter:

"The absolute folly and moral bankruptcy of this plan is apparent." He is

referring to the budget reconciliation package that the Republicans are about ready to pass out of this Chamber.

This gentleman says, "The absolute folly and moral bankruptcy of this plan is apparent to the United States Senate, who voted to bar funding for it from the appropriations bill now in conference.

"The VFW," I say to my friends, "urges the Congress to put a stop to the wartime assault on past and present warriors who have fought for and continue to defend our country."

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is from the VFW.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. "Understand that this situation is totally unacceptable to the VFW and its 2.4 million members and auxiliaries. We will do what is necessary to protect, in Lincoln's words, 'He who bore the battle, and his widow, and his orphan.' These words are marked on the front of the VA headquarters building. I urge you to take them to heart. Sincerely, Robert E. Wallace, Executive Director, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Washington Office."

We are not making this up. This is the VFW.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, will the gentleman from Ohio give that to the Clerk so that we can enter it into the RECORD.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I will enter the letter into the RECORD at this time.

NOVEMBER 7, 2005.

ALL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: The absolute folly and moral bankruptcy of this plan is apparent to the United States Senate, who voted to bar funding for it from the appropriation bill now in conference. We have heard, however, that the House Leadership fully intends to strip this provision from the bill, and require the VA to execute this witch-hunt of a review.

The VFW urges the Congress to put a stop to this wartime assault on past and present warriors who have fought for, and continue to defend our country. Understand that this situation is totally unacceptable to the VFW, and its 2.4 million members and auxiliaries. We will do what is necessary to protect, in Lincoln's words, "He who bore the battle, and his widow, and his orphan." These words are marked on the front of the VA headquarters building. I urge you to take them to heart.

Sincerely,

ROBERT E. WALLACE,  
Executive Director,  
VFW Washington Office.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, what is going to happen is that historians are going to look at this moment right now in the U.S. Congress; they are going to look at this very moment, as we are on the floor right now, and the Rules Committee, they are meeting behind closed doors, at night, in the dark, making decisions that are going to affect the American people, the everyday American people. It is going to affect them.

This is not a hearing that is broadcast to the American people; it is not a hearing, not even in the daytime. It is a hearing in the middle of the night. And what they are going to do in that closed-door hearing is set the stage to try to come to this floor.

They cannot persuade our Members on this side, because we are already on the side of the American people. We already know, together we can do better on this side of the aisle. We already know that we put forth amendments in the Budget Committee that were voted down on a party-line vote.

As it relates to the oil companies' profits, there was a hearing today with the oil companies here. They must have heard us talk about it, and so they said, Well, let us call a couple of them in and let us talk to them about why the American people possibly got price-gouged. A lot of talk.

But it was the Democratic Caucus and the Democrats in committee that put forth the amendment, not talk, but action, to make sure that the American people no longer were being price-gouged; and also making sure that those individuals in America that have to pay higher fees, especially our poor, for heating oil and gas this winter. Action, not talk. To come to the floor and to just talk, without action.

We in the minority, and by the fact that we are in the minority, we are trying to do the best that we can to fight on behalf of the American people that sent us here to represent them throughout this country, we are here fighting. We are not just giving them lip service. We are not saying, Hey, listen, we are going left, but we are really going right. We are not here to sugar-coat or glaze the reality.

The reality is the fact that they know that they are wrong, and they know they are going to have a problem with the vote. I guarantee my colleagues, as sure as my name is KENDRICK MEEK, when that board opens up tomorrow, the vote on the budget, we are going to be here for some time. We are going to be here for some time while arms are being twisted, while the special interests are calling in on cell phones saying, you have to vote for this because our stuff is in that bill.

But meanwhile, back at the ranch, I grabbed the PAC list a little earlier. I did not see a PAC on behalf of people who fought for this country. I did not even see a PAC that was put forth by the children in America that are on Title I and free and reduced lunches; I did not see a PAC on their behalf to get the attention of this Congress. I did not even see a PAC that said, Hey, listen, we just want you to do the right thing on behalf of the American people. I did not see that PAC listed on the PAC list.

But I will tell my colleagues this: This is very disturbing.

The reason why I asked the gentleman to put that VFW letter into the RECORD, and we need to put that AARP letter that came in yesterday since we

are helping seniors, into the RECORD, because we want historians to look at the time when we had the highest deficit in the history of the Republic, we want historians to be able to look at when one President, with a majority Congress, with a majority House and a majority Senate, borrowed more from foreign countries than 42 previous Presidents and 42 previous administrations, Democrats and Republican.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to listen to our Republican colleagues and friends in the previous hour. I heard the word "reform" over and over again. I heard the term "fiscal responsibility." I heard the concept or the phrase "spending cuts reining in" and "making government smaller."

□ 2100

And they kept referring to Democrats and the minority side with certain gestures. I guess my response is, who has been running this place for 12 years? Who has been in charge, Mr. Speaker, for 12 years? It was in 1994 that the Republicans came to power and took control of this body. Twelve years ago. Is it just dawning on you now that fiscal responsibility is essential to our economy, essential to the future of our children? And reform, you have had 12 years to do reform. They speak of the veterans and health care and they recite statistics and they were mostly newer Members of the Republican Party that spoke here tonight, so maybe they are unaware of what the Republican leadership in the House did about a year or two ago. The chairman of the veterans services committee, the then chairman was the gentleman from New Jersey, someone whom I disagree with on occasion, but for whom I have great respect because he tells it like it is and he stands tall, and if he believes in something his commitment is unwavering. He made a big mistake. He sided with the VFW. He sided with the American Legion and the DAV, Disabled American Veterans organization. These are the people who understand best. They are not governmental organizations. They are non-profit voluntary associations of veterans.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Who do not give money.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Who do not give money to politicians. But because he sided with them in terms of their priorities, their expression of what was needed to properly respect the needs of American servicepeople who have done so much for this country, you know what happened to him? Now, they probably do not know this. He got fired, for all intents and purposes. He was removed as chairman of that veterans services committee. And that is CHRIS SMITH, a man of courage and moral principle.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If the gentleman will yield, even more, not only was he removed as chairman; he was taken off the committee. I think he was taken off the committee as it re-

lates to being the chairman. I am not just talking about being off the committee, taken out of the chairmanship. But that is what you get when you stand up against the machine.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The machine.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is what happens to so many individuals that stand up against the machine.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thought it was very interesting how, as we were gathering or coordinating our efforts here tonight, I thought as I was listening to our Republican friends on the other side, there were things missing that I think the American people, Mr. Speaker, need to know about. No one on the other side said that we should cut the \$16 billion in oil subsidies to pay for some of the other cuts that are being made for poor children or middle-class college students. No one on the other side said anything about the \$100 billion in subsidies that are going to the pharmaceutical companies. No one said anything about that. And if there is any concern about the lack of responsibility, the incompetent leadership, complete incompetence, complete inability to govern, all we need to do is look at what has happened in the last 4 years.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I say to the gentleman from Ohio, how about some welfare reform? Welfare reform for the oil industry and welfare reform for the pharmaceutical companies. You know, when they speak to the issue of welfare reform, they are not talking about the oil industry or the drug manufacturers. No, they are not talking about those folk. They are not talking about corporate welfare. And as you just indicated, \$16 billion to go to Big Oil for what? For an industry that just had record profits.

As you indicated earlier, they were up here today, brought up here by Republicans because it is so embarrassing to have passed an appropriation and provided subsidies for Big Oil, and then they report these incredible profits. I mean, it was embarrassing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we may be a little more intense tonight than normal, and the reason is that tomorrow this budget may come before this House, and all the rhetoric over the past few weeks may become reality tomorrow on this floor. And we are not going to sit up in our offices and watch C-SPAN and watch this happen. We are not going to sit in our office and turn on Chris Matthews or some MTV, VH-1 show and just relax tonight.

The American people will be hurt if this budget passes this Congress tomorrow. People who are on Medicaid will be hurt tomorrow. People who are trying to bite, scratch, and pinch to send their kids to college will be hurt tomorrow. And veterans who fought for this country will be hurt tomorrow. And if they think we are going to stand up, or lay down, in our offices and turn

the TV on or go back home to our apartments and watch this happen without a fight, they have got another thing coming, because they have taken this country, and in the last 4 years borrowed over \$1 trillion from foreign countries. In the last 224 years, we have not borrowed that much from foreign countries.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I know you have a point there. I just want a point of clarification. Point of clarification. I did speak correctly, Mr. Speaker, when I said that the chairman, the past chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Republican, was not only removed as chairman, but kicked off of the committee. They did not even want his thoughts on the committee because he stood up for veterans. He stepped out of line. He stepped out of line. Chairman SMITH, CHRIS SMITH stepped out of line, because he did what he thought was right. I am holding in my hand, and I am sorry, but I just wanted to share that because we were making a point earlier and I said he was off the committee, and then folks were looking around. I knew that I was correct.

Here is the legislative directory for the 109th Congress. It has the names of the members on the committee, and I do not blame the Members. I am talking about the leadership. But there are two spots there that say vacancy, vacancy. One of those vacancies was the past chairman of that committee who was a Republican that could no longer stomach doing what the Republican leadership was asking in this House for him to do.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Because he sided with the veterans of foreign wars, with the American Legion, with the disabled veterans and the various veterans service organizations.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the American people, for that matter.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And the American people. Because the American people want to take care of the veteran. Before we leave the veteran issue, if anyone who should be watching our conversation this evening has any doubts, do not call us. Do not call our offices. Do not call the offices of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Do not call the Republican Members. Do not call the Republican leadership. Call the Veterans of Foreign Wars where you live. Call the American Legion where you live.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We have a very important holiday coming up the day after tomorrow, and each of us is hoping that we have an opportunity to go home and look our veterans in the eye and tell them how much we appreciate and honor them. And I know that I will be able to do that in good conscience. I know that I will stand proud with my veterans and tell them that I did everything I could and will continue to do everything I can and House Democrats will continue to do everything we can to ensure that we honor their service.

I certainly would not want to be any Member of Congress with an R next to

their name that votes for this bill tomorrow if it comes up on the floor because, growing up, my mom always told me that the guide that I should use when making a decision was whether I was going to be able to sleep well and then wake up in the morning and look at myself in the mirror and be comfortable with the decision that I made and know that I did the right thing.

Well, I wonder just how well our Republican friends on the other side of the aisle are going to be sleeping tonight. They have a lot for their stomach to be churning about; and for those that are going to wake up in the morning and decide that they are going to vote "aye" and support this legislation, I do not know how the very next morning they are going to be able to stand on the podium with their veterans and look them in the eye and say that they continue to honor them.

And, you know, we sometimes stand here and people listening to us or, Mr. Speaker, sometimes people might think that, you know, this is just our opinion, that we are obviously committed Democrats and committed to our beliefs and our agenda. But we are here every night not representing just our own opinion, although we certainly do vociferously express our opinion. We like to make sure that we bring third-party validators to back up the opinion that we are espousing on this floor.

I just want to read an excerpt from a letter that was sent to each Member of Congress, all 535 Members of us, of these two Chambers, on Monday, November 7, 2005 by Robert E. Wallace who is the executive director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Washington office. And I am hopeful that I am not being repetitive. I am not sure if you have already read his words. But, you know, for those that may question whether or not we know what we are talking about or that we are exaggerating or engaging in hyperbole when it comes to what is in this bill and the priorities of the Republican leadership versus our priorities when it comes to commitment to veterans, he says:

"Dear Senator or Representative. To all Members of Congress, we have at the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, VFW, observed for the past several months astonishing efforts to cast veterans who have been found to be severely disabled by the Department of Veterans Affairs' own determinations as undeserving of the veterans benefits their grateful Nation has provided for them in the law. This assault on the most vulnerable members of the veteran community, disabled in service to this country and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, is broad in its scope and execution. At a time when the VA should be preparing to serve combat veterans returning from the war on terrorism being fought in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, they are expending their limited resources planning a systematic effort to reduce or remove benefits earned by

the parents and older siblings of the troops fighting in the field today."

Well, that is not TIM RYAN saying it. That is not DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ or BILL DELAHUNT or KENDRICK MEEK saying it. That is the executive director of the VFW's Washington office.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They are just saying stop. The VFW is telling the Republican Party, Mr. Speaker, stop. Look what you are doing. You are hurting veterans. I mean, the executive director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars does not just say I am going to send a letter to Congress today, Mr. Speaker. Stop it. You are going to hurt veterans. And at the same time, you are giving tax cuts to people who make \$1 million a year or more. You are giving \$16 billion in subsidies to the oil companies. You are giving handouts to the pharmaceutical companies, the wealthiest corporations in the world. And you are cutting veterans benefits. What is going on here?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I think what is going on is that there is a misunderstanding on the part of the Republican leadership when they speak of patriotism. Patriotism is not about a parade. It is not simply respect for the flag. It is about treating the men and women who go to war for us, who serve the country with respect.

□ 2115

That is what patriotism is about.

We hear a lot about patriotism on the floor of this House, and I am sure that those words are uttered with great conviction and sincerity. But I guess what we are trying to convey is that patriotism is not just rhetoric.

Remember what Franklin Delano Roosevelt used to say during World War II? Shared sacrifice. Who is sacrificing for our veterans? Those that receive this egregious tax benefit who are among the most affluent in America. I daresay if those people were inquired of, one by one, they would say, Take that tax break; I want the veterans to be respected.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I heard some of our friends on the other side of the aisle taking issue or calling into question what we have been saying about what they would propose to do to our Nation's veterans. I did not notice them holding up anything in black and white that disproves what we are saying.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Did you hear about reform?

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I did not notice.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Did you hear about limited government? Did you hear about fiscal responsibility?

You know what is interesting? I served with a gentleman who is a genuine conservative and he was part of the leadership on the Republican side. He chose not to run again. And I guess that must be a very liberating experience, because he recently spoke out and this is what he said:

Our President is publicly oblivious to criticism, although off-the-record reports indicate his patience is running thin inside the White House. He argues the right wing is now spending like profligates with no tomorrow, and is displaying a very real arrogance. What they say about absolute power is coming to reality.

Those words were written by, as I said, a former member of the Republican leadership, Representative J.C. Watts of Oklahoma, a conservative, a man of principle.

As I said earlier, we have heard about reform. We hear about we have got to limit government. Well, what have they been doing for 12 years?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It had to be a joke. They had to be kidding.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Maybe it is just that they do not get it. They have not been here long enough to understand that they have been in power for 12 years. I mean, we have a single-party government in this country today, the Senate, the House, and the White House. And yet conservatives like the President of the American Conservative Union, David Keen, he noted in a letter to members that Federal spending has increased by \$300 billion since George Bush took office, including \$96 billion for domestic social welfare programs. By comparison, Keen said, spending increased by only \$51 billion during President Clinton's 8 years. So I guess what we are talking about is the capacity of an administration to spend money wisely and effectively.

We heard about welfare reform, Mr. Speaker, and yet we have created a welfare state for major corporations. We have created in Iraq a welfare state for Iraqis. And as we have said here before, it was the Republican majority that insisted that the money that goes to Iraq, to rebuild Iraq, never be paid back to the American taxpayers. That just does not make any sense. That makes absolutely no sense. And we stood here on this floor and said, Make it a loan so that we get the money back, so that we can use it to control the deficit, this deficit that is the product of this administration and this Congress.

When Bill Clinton left office, there was a surplus of \$5.6 trillion. And I kept hearing something about facts over here. Well, that is a fact that they should recognize, the Republican majority. Bill Clinton left a surplus for the American people. And what do we have now? We have trillions, trillions of a deficit that will explode in future years harming the interests of generations of Americans to come.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And their answer to the deficit that they have ballooned is to not just hurt veterans, but to hurt people just when they are on the cusp of being able to make a change and turn the corner in their life. There are \$844 million in food stamp cuts in this bill.

Now, I have heard some of our friends on the Republican side of the aisle

argue that there is fraud in the food stamp program and that there are people who are collecting food stamps that do not deserve it or maybe we do not have as many people who need food stamps these days. Well, today, not yesterday, not 5 months ago, not a year ago, today, this is a picture of a line of 25,000 people, 25,000 people in Broward County where I am from, who lined up as early as 3:00 in the morning to sign up for food stamps following Hurricane Wilma.

Now, I checked to make sure that I was being accurate when I came down here tonight. This food stamp application process is through the regular food stamp program, nothing special, no special appropriations, nothing from FEMA. This is 25,000 people, most of whom have never before applied for public assistance.

Now, if the Republicans are going to say that there are not people in need and that it is more important to cut taxes for the wealthy then to provide for the people who are standing in this line, who have already been through so much, then really I guess we are serving with many who are serving in this Chamber without conscience.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, may I say something?

I do not know if the gentlewoman had the opportunity to listen earlier to our friends and colleagues, but they talked about common sense and they talked about respect for families. And yet in their proposal there is a cut of some \$5 billion in a category called child support enforcement.

Now, common sense would dictate that if you invest money, if you invest \$1 and get \$4 in return that you do it because that is a good deal. Well, that is a bureaucratic term, child support enforcement. Really what it comes down to is, in most cases, deadbeats, deadbeat fathers who are running out on their obligation to their children, leaving mom and the children without any support, and forcing them onto welfare.

So instead of really demonstrating common sense, this Republican budget reduces the enforcement of audits on fathers to provide support for their children and former wives. It eliminates that or reduces it by \$5 billion, and that translates, if you look at it as a business decision, into a loss of some \$20 billion, \$20 billion that would go to support children in this country.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Let us just make sure people understand and the Speaker understands that we are not talking about made-up numbers here that we are just pulling out of thin air.

In the Washington Post last Thursday, another third-party validator, they describe the cuts in this bill and they go on to say, The food stamp cuts in the House measure would knock nearly 300,000 people off nutritional assistance programs, including 70,000 legal immigrants, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Of-

fice, which is the office that we get our economic facts from.

Those immigrants would lose their benefits because the House measure would require legal immigrants to live in the United States for 7 years before becoming eligible for receiving food stamps. About 40,000 children would lose eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches, the CBO estimated. The food stamp cuts, if approved, will especially affect 11 States, including Maryland, that use the changes in the food stamp law, approved with the President's support in 2002, to expand eligibility and to simplify the application process.

Under the House measure that we will consider tomorrow, eligibility for food stamps would be tightened to exclude some recipients, get this, who qualify for nutritional support simply because they qualify for other anti-poverty programs funded by the Federal welfare program known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, not eliminate fraud, not eliminate people who are not supposed to be getting food stamps, but eliminate people who already qualify because they qualify for other poverty programs.

And then today we have 25,000 more people in one county applying for the same program that we are going to cut 300,000 from tomorrow if this bill passes.

Where is outrage? Where is the conscience? I want to know how our colleagues are going to sleep tonight knowing that they have to cast this vote tomorrow.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we have been talking for a little while here. I think it is important for us to just kind of recap before we get on to something else.

The Republican budget that is going to pass this House tomorrow, probably without one Democratic vote, probably anyone on this side of the aisle will not vote for this bill because of the egregious cuts in there.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, let me just say real quick, the gentleman said, when it passes the House floor tomorrow, and I think the reason why you said that, because I know personally that the gentleman has watched on 3, 4, 5 major votes, that 20 minutes into the vote, 30 minutes into the vote, 1 hour into the vote, 90 minutes into the vote, the arm-twisting, the squeals, the cries from this side of the aisle of individuals getting hammered, literally, with their hands on the table saying that you will vote for this. You will vote for this. And that is the reason why the gentleman is speaking in those terms, "when it passes."

But I am going to say something. I believe in the spirit of the American people. I hope it rises up tomorrow in a way that it should rise up against this very bad budget. I hope that we can adopt the Democratic budget that is sensible, that put us on the trail for fiscal responsibility by 2015, to make sure that we prioritize on behalf of Americans and not on behalf of special interests.

□ 2130

So you are 110 percent right. If things happen at all the way it appears here under this Republican majority, it will pass. It will pass because they will literally make their Members vote for it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that. So we go through this bill here and we look at the cuts.

Medicaid cuts on poor and working-class families who are trying to get some health care for their kids, student loan cuts \$14.3 billion; \$24 billion in reduced child support collections. It is going to knock 300,000 Americans off food stamps. Many of them have been displaced because of the natural disasters. 40,000 kids are going to get kicked off school lunch programs. Foster care is going to take a hit of 7 or \$800 million, I believe. Veterans are going to get cut \$600 million. There is a funny thing here because at the same time all this is going on, our friends who make more than a half a million dollars a year are going to receive a tax cut worth \$70 billion.

So as all of these programs on college students and their parents, Medicaid, child support, food stamps, veterans, foster care are getting cut, there is going to be \$70 billion in tax cuts for people who make more than a half a million dollars a year; and before I yield over there to my friend from Florida, there is something funny about this list that we have here.

I am looking at this: poor kids and poor mothers on Medicaid, who have their kids on Medicaid; college students who are just trying to get a better life, improve themselves; kids on child support and mothers who are receiving child support; people on food stamps; kids and families who qualify for the school lunch program; veterans.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, do you know what that is called? That is called taking from the needy and giving to the greedy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Exactly right, and there is a funny thing here. It is that none of these groups who are going to face the cuts tomorrow from our Republican friends have a lobby group on Shakedown Street, on K Street, not one of them. There is no lobby group for the college students who are going to have to pay more on student loans. There is no lobby group for the kids who need foster care.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the American people recognize that this budget is bought and paid for by the special interests on K Street, down on Shakedown Street, because our friends who are given the tax cuts will not take the \$16 billion from the oil companies that they are giving in subsidies. They will not reduce the cost of the Medicare part B prescription drug bill. They will not do it, the billions that are going to go to the pharmaceutical industry. Those people are off the table. The Republican majority will not cut from them.

They have to go to poor kids who qualify for free and reduced lunch to go

try to balance the budget; and at the same time, they are giving more tax cuts. It is frustrating to me as a Member of Congress, from a district that has a high unemployment rate, a district that 50 percent of the people in my district who pay taxes did not even receive a tax cut and many who either qualify for these programs or want to qualify for the student loans and the Pell grants so they could improve their lives are going to get hurt because of this.

At the same time, the lack of leadership, the incompetence, the inability to govern in a way that will improve the country and invest in the country continues down here, this is a disgrace.

This budget is an absolute disgrace, and you take any American and you ask them to come down here and be the distinguished gentleman like the movie and come down here and try to make the decisions that we have to make and you look at what we look at, there are not many Americans who would say giving tax cuts to people who make \$1 million a year and cutting from the middle class, cutting from Medicare, cutting from our seniors' health care program or the poverty programs in this country is somehow okay.

One final comment. We heard from a lot of the religious organizations through the course of the last election, the Christian Coalition. I spent 12 years in Catholic schools, and I remember the Christianity I learned about had more to do with helping people who were not doing so well and trying to do your best to lift them up. To listen to the rhetoric come out of the organizations, not the members of the organizations because there are a lot of Christians in my district, these cuts offend them. The people who work at Catholic Charities, this offends them; and for the organizations who say they are religious to be deaf on this issue is an outrage.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, there is nothing more evident than the truth as it relates to this budget, and I mentioned earlier about holding the clock open and violating the spirit of the rules of the House when there is a 15-minute vote called. It is customary to give Members 5 extra minutes to get here to vote, but it is not customary to hold a clock open for 3 hours.

Let me just say, October 7, 2005, Republicans held open a 5-minute vote on the Gasoline for America's Security Act for over 40 minutes to pass the energy bill, Republicans, which also passed by two votes because of the arm twisting.

On November 22, 2003, the majority held open the vote for 3 hours, the longest in the history of the House of Representatives, on the prescription drug bill.

Then on the Central American Free Trade Agreement on July 27 and 28, it has two dates because the clock was held open so long. For a 15-minute vote, the vote was held open for over

an hour; and it passed on a 217 to 215 vote.

Here is the evidence. It is in the RECORD. I do not need to enter it. It is already there.

When you talk about how can this happen, how could this be allowed to happen in America, as we speak now, the Rules Committee is meeting in a dark room just above this Chamber, trying to figure out how they are going to come to the floor under the lights and the cameras and justify voting for a budget like this.

I am wondering where the majority's letters are from Family U.S.A. that is saying that these Medicaid cuts that the House has, that it will cause enormous hardships out there. Where is their letter and support from the AARP, the largest retirement organization in the world, that is saying that they are against the Medicaid cuts because it will affect seniors? Where are their third-party validators, these non-partisan groups? I have to question that because I cannot help think about what we are facing right now.

We are facing allegations in the White House of outing a CIA agent and several other agents because someone thought that it would be politically right for them to share classified information about a clandestine agent with reporters. This is not what I am saying; this is what the indictment says.

You know what I did get, not from help from the majority, but we finally got the list of the subpoenas that were issued under the Clinton administration versus the Bush administration. It saddens me to see that the Republicans can provide oversight when they want to. They can get to the bottom of what actually happened when they want to.

I will tell you this, just one committee I am going to take, just one committee, the House Government Reform Committee issued over 1,089 subpoenas to the Clinton administration. That is the record. That is not my report; that is what the record reflects. Ninety-seven percent of those subpoenas were targeted towards the Clinton administration and the Democratic Party. Only 11 subpoenas for the Republicans, 11 out of 1,089.

It goes on further to say that the GAO, this is the Government Accountability Office, examined the White House's efforts to provide documents to the Congress over an 18-month period from October 1996 to March 1, 1999. The Government Accountability Office found that during that period the White House staff spent, alone, over 55,000 hours responding to over 300 congressional requests, producing hundreds of thousand of pages of documents and videotapes and audiotapes to the Congress.

They called 134 Clinton administration White House agency officials to hearings concerning allegations of the Clinton administration. The witnesses were called to appear before the committee and in public session, not secret session, but public session, so the

American people can see it. The White House chief of staff and the counsel to the President, the counsel to the Vice President, all of them were called here, spent over 568 hours in depositions with staff. That is just with staff. They also provided discussions between the President and his advisers. President Clinton waived the executive privilege and allowed these advisers to testify before the committee about their discussions with him.

Internal White House e-mails, over \$12 million was spent to reconstruct those e-mails. Confidential conversations within the White House counsel's office were provided to the Congress, but now we have questionable intelligence that sent us to war. We have a CIA agent that has been outed, and this is what the Republican Congress does now.

Well, we know that CIA agents are being outed, but we are not looking over there because our friends may be embarrassed. It may jeopardize national security, but that is not important. It is all about making sure that we stay in power and that we do not pay attention to what the American people constitutionally have asked us to do, to provide oversight and to give the American people a voice when wrongdoing is evident, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

It is a shame. It is a shame that this is happening as we speak in this Congress.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. But do not worry because last week President Bush rode in on his white steed to the rescue of the American people and addressed the culture of corruption and cronyism and lack of competence that is going on and emanating from the White House.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What did he do?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. He required all of the White House staff to take an ethics refresher course this week.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Is that mandatory?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Oh, yes, do not worry. White House staff attendance is mandatory for anyone holding any level of security clearance.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Is this a semester-long course?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. No. This is a 4-hour class that actually I think it is being given this week by White House counsel Harriet Miers' office, who, of course, we know has been doing such a bang-up job at guiding the White House through their ethical morass.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not being facetious for a moment, we have, I would submit, a very serious problem in terms of the health of our democratic institutions. There has not been, and if you reflect, you will not be able to identify another administration with the obsession for secrecy that this administration has.

What I found particularly interesting, the Republican chairman, highly respected, former Governor of New Jersey, Tom Kean, who headed the

independent 9/11 Commission report, he observed that many so-called classified documents he reviewed in the course of their investigation were not true secrets as much as there was information that was publicly available.

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It just did not make any sense at all. And what we have seen is a 25 percent increase on documents being classified almost on an annual basis in this administration. We know that they refuse to submit to any oversight or any accountability, and the American people should know that.

In a moment of candor, a friend of ours, again a senior member of the Republican Caucus, had this to say. He aptly characterized recent congressional oversight of the administration. This is Mr. RAY LAHOOD, a very solid Member and someone respected on both sides of the aisle. These are his words, not mine. This is RAY LAHOOD, whom the Speaker and every Member in this body knows and respects.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Good man.

Mr. DELAHUNT. "Our party controls the levers of government. We are not about to go out and look beneath a bunch of rocks to try to cause heartburn."

In other words, you have a shroud of secrecy that has descended around the democratic institutions that are controlled by the majority party. That is dangerous.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield, this is about protecting their party. If the Republicans control the House and the Senate and the White House, and they are not being investigated to find what went wrong, whether it was Katrina or the CIA leak or Karl Rove or "Scooter" Libby or the Vice President's role in all this, or how are we going to balance the budget, if the Republican Party is not willing to investigate those problems, those situations, then they are putting the Republican Party before the interests of the country. And that has been the consistent modus operandi of this institution.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And if you disagree with them, what happens?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You get punished.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Right. Ask General Shinseki, who was dismissed when he disagreed, when he gave just a different opinion as to the number of troops that were going to be required in Iraq. He said 300,000. The then-Under Secretary of Defense, Mr. Wolfowitz, said, Hey, that is vastly overrated. Subsequently, we have discovered that the good general was correct.

What about Larry Lindsey, who was an economic adviser to the President and who came out with an estimate that the range of dollars that would be necessary in Iraq would go from \$100 billion to \$200 billion. We are way past \$200 billion now. But the administration, the White House, kept saying it will not exceed \$60 billion. The American people should remember that.

And what happened to Larry Lindsey? He got bumped too.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If my colleague will give out the Web site before we have to close.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We want an opportunity to take this Congress and this country in a new direction, change the way we are going and derive some independence. We are at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. That is 30, the number, at mail.house.gov.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Members for joining us here this hour. I look forward to being back on the floor, all of us, in one more hour when my colleague claims his hour so that we can continue sharing good information not only with the Members but the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this hour.

#### THE PRESIDENT, AND THE WAR ON TERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be recognized, and as I get organized here, I would point out that I have had the privilege to listen to this dialogue here tonight. I know that this group comes to the floor nearly every night, and that shows a certain kind of tenacity, and I appreciate that effort they put into this. But I wanted to just start down the list of some of the things that I heard and address some of the remarks.

I happen to have seen a poster that I hope was not presented here, because I believe it would have challenged the mendacity of the President, and I believe that would have been out of order here in these Chambers, Mr. Speaker. So I hope that kind of poster is never presented. But I will say that I have heard that challenge made in a number of different oblique ways.

I have looked into the eyes of this President, and I think there is a distinction that should be made in a very clear way to the people here on the floor every night, the 30-something Group and all the Members of this Congress, Mr. Speaker, and the people in this country, and that is there is a difference between a mistake and a lie.

I look back on a Presidential campaign, and I remember the face and the voice of Charlton Heston as it came on television over and over again. He said to the previous President over the airwaves of television, "Mr. President, when you say something that's wrong and you don't know that it's wrong, that's a mistake. When you say something that's wrong and you know that it's wrong, that's a lie." That distinction seems to be lost amongst many of